

DC Mayor's
Office on Asian &
Pacific Islander Affairs
OAPIA



2006

Annual Report



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Within this city of great diversity, the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) community is the most diverse of all minority communities. Members come from more than 20 countries and speak dozens of languages and/or dialects. The mission of the Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) is to ensure that the full range of health, education, employment, and social services are available to the API community in the District of Columbia. OAPIA is the liaison between the District government and the API community. It advises the Mayor, the Council, and the District Agencies on the views, needs, and concerns of the District's fastest growing minority group.

To accomplish its mission, OAPIA works with all levels of government and the API community. It works in the following focus areas:

Capacity Building

OAPIA connects community-based organizations (CBOs) to various organizations that provide technical assistance and research tools to locate sources of funding. It also seeks opportunities for public or private partnerships that may benefit CBOs and facilitates seminars or training mechanisms.

Community Outreach

OAPIA conducts resident and merchant outreach initiatives to engage, educate, and keep citizens informed about the District's programs and services.

Civic Involvement

OAPIA encourages API community members with limited English proficiency to participate in civic affairs and government programs in their neighborhoods.

Inter-Agency Support

OAPIA supports District Agencies regarding access to services and programs for API community.

Language Access

OAPIA provide assistance to District Agencies required to provide translated documents and oral language services to LEP populations. This report documents the activities and projects that OAPIA has implemented in Fiscal Year 2006 in these focus areas.



“Enriched by Diversity, United as One Community”

OAPIA Community Grants: Fiscal Year 2006 marked the first year in OAPIA's 19-year history that it was able to distribute community grants. Through the advocacy work of API community-based organizations (CBOs) and the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, Mayor Anthony A. Williams earmarked **\$250,000** in funds for OAPIA to:

- Assist struggling CBOs that have been providing much needed services to underserved API residents;
- Ensure that public funds intended for diverse and special population are set aside for such diverse, underserved population like the API community;
- Advance the building of capacity of infrastructures for the CBOs and the general development of the API community.

OAPIA was given the responsibility of administering and managing the community grants. The grant funds enhance existing and startup programs focused on improving health, education, legal services and employment for APIs.

Seven community-based organizations received community grants at OAPIA's award ceremony. The CBOs that received awards were:

- Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (Legal Services) - \$45,000
- Asian American Leadership Empowerment and Development (Youth Services) - \$35,000
- Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (Health Services) - \$22,000
- Chinatown Service Center (Social Services) - \$33,000
- Greater Washington Urban League – Asian Senior Center (Health Services) - \$20,000
- Newcomers Community Service Center (Employment Services) - \$40,000
- Vietnamese American Community Service Center (Family Services) - \$35,000

OAPIA allotted \$20,000 in grant funding to provide technical assistance and grant monitoring. These community grants provide much needed financial support to API CBOs, providing services to linguistically isolated and underserved APIs. In addition, the \$20,000 allotted for technical assistance allows API CBOs opportunities to develop their organization and/or programs without dipping into their limited general funding.

Capacity Building Capacity Building



API community based organizations were awarded the grant from OAPIA

OAPIA disseminated information on government programs, services, and mayoral activities to over four thousand constituents in the API community through various outreach mechanisms such as public outreach and electronic methods. For FY06, OAPIA visited 800 merchants, meeting its target community outreach number for the year. It has also expanded its community outreach activities to include the local API students, attending colleges and universities in the District. OAPIA initiated communication with the different API student organizations and community service offices to disseminated information to keep them abreast of new projects or upcoming events.

In conjunction to the community outreach activities, OAPIA also continued to provide case assistance to API residents and merchants. Merchant case assistance usually involved business licensing, safety issues, sanitation and business-related areas. OAPIA updated its merchant brochures in early 2006 which compiled the frequently asked questions from merchants. The brochures included topics on Business License, Public Works, and Safety. These brochures were distributed door-to-door to more than 600 merchants in the District of Columbia. In FY06, OAPIA provided 70 case assistance regarding API residents. Most (80%) of the case assistance is done on site by OAPIA or OAPIA refers residents to other government agencies and/or API CBOs that can help.

OAPIA's community outreach also involved electronic communication and media. OAPIA was able to increase subscription to the e-Newsletter and list-serv. The monthly e-Newsletter titled "The API Connection" highlights past and upcoming community events, funding resources, and various job opportunities for APIs. The list-serv provided API constituents with educational opportunities, cultural activities, and public announcements on government services and events. In addition, OAPIA used its established relationship with various ethnic media to circulate public announcements to audiences who are limited English proficient.

In order to conduct more outreach to API merchants in the District, OAPIA also hosted a weekly radio program in conjunction with the Korean American Business Association (KABA). "Era of Success—Washington Korean Merchants Hour" has been aired every Tuesday afternoon on AM 1310 (WDCT) from 2:20

Community Outreach

Community Outreach



OAPIA's Soohyun Koo with Gary Cha at the "Era of Success - Washington Korean Merchants Hour" radio show.

to 2:50 p.m. since August of 2005. In addition to a live discussion in Korean, the interactive program also gave merchants the opportunity to call in with questions and concerns. A summary of every program had been chronicled weekly in The Korea Daily Washington (Joong Ang Daily), a local Korean print media. Since the launching of the live Korean radio show, phone inquiries and case assistance requests by Korean American merchants have increased steadily.

Currently two-thirds of DC small businesses are owned by APIs, with the majority of those business owners being Korean Americans. Many of these merchants speak little English. OAPIA considers AM 1310 WDCT to be a prime resource because the radio captures the highest audience rating in the local Korean community.

Face-to-face meetings, electronic communication, and media have enabled OAPIA to effectively educate and inform API residents and merchants, regarding services and programs in the District.



Pacific Islander groups performing at the Asian Heritage Month Celebration



Vietnamese American group came at the Asian Heritage Month Celebration

OAPIA organized the following events to engaged APIs to be more involved with their community. They ranged from engaging APIs in the political process to connecting APIs to health services and screening. They involved every age group and profession from youth to merchants.

Citizen Summit: The District of Columbia held its fourth “Citizen Summit” on November 19, 2005, attracting more than 2,000 people to determine how the city could be more effective in “Lifting All Communities.” Gathered together at the Washington Convention Center for the day-long forum, participants discussed and voted for priorities on how the District of Columbia could best:

- Support growth and development of all youths;
- Expand jobs and employment prospects for all citizens;
- Rebuild a library system serving all citizens; and
- Create an inclusive city through housing and economic development.

Through OAPIA's proactive outreach, an overwhelming number of Asians and Pacific Islanders (APIs) participated at the Citizen Summit. There was a total of 11% API participants from all registrants. The participants were able to conduct constructive discussion on various community issues with the assistance of more than 30 OAPIA recruited bilingual facilitators and note takers.

The suggestions provided by API participants included hiring more API bilingual staff in DC Public Schools and DC Public Libraries, providing affordable housing to low-income families, and increasing the number of multicultural youth activities.

May Asian Heritage Month Celebration: OAPIA held its “Annual May Asian Heritage Month Celebration” on Thursday, May 25, 2006 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. library. OAPIA organized the event to celebrate the diversity of API cultures and traditions, as well as recognized the contributions of APIs to the District of Columbia. The event was highlighted by six beautiful cultural performances. This year, OAPIA invited performing groups that had not performed at the May Heritage Month Celebration before. The performances represented different Asian and

Civic Involvement & Engagement

Civic Involvement & Engagement



Asian seniors participating at the Citizen Summit

Pacific Islander cultures, and the celebration also featured many delicious ethnic foods and beverages donated by local restaurants and individuals.

Similar to past years, the DC Mayor's Community Service Awards were also given to organizations and individuals who have shown commitment and excellence in serving and making tremendous impacts to the lives of many members of the API community. The May Heritage Month Celebration stressed the significance of API contributions in the life of the District. Hundreds of API residents and professionals of all ages attended.

ImmigrASIAN Fair: In May, OAPIA held its "ImmigrASIAN Fair" where different organizations were invited to provide free information, health screenings, and legal consultations to residents. Large mobile buses were parked outside the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library for allergy, asthma, diabetes, dental, hearing, HIV, and optical screenings. The ImmigrASIAN fair achieved a successful turnout of more than 250 API residents. This was made possible with the strong support of organizations such as AMERIGROUP, APA Legal Resource Center, Catholic Charities and Customs & Immigration Service, Lion's Club and Unity Health Care System.

OAPIA also partnered with several CBOs for the API Voter's Registration Drive to encourage API residents to register and vote during the elections. Many API residents were visited and assisted in their language to register.

In addition to these events, OAPIA also produced resourceful information for API residents through its Resident Information Booklets. These booklets were distributed throughout the year at various events and contain important information on topics such as Employment & Education, Health & Human Resources, Housing, and Safety. They are available in Chinese and Vietnamese as these two groups comprise the largest residential Asian population in the District.

DiverseCITY Job Fair: OAPIA hosted its "2nd Annual DiverseCITY Job Fair" on September 8, 2006. This free event was organized to provide the API employees with an opportunity to explore a wide range of possibilities in other fields, to help



Unity Health Care providing free health screening to Asian residents



Residents receiving free blood pressure check up provided by AMERIGROUP

individuals who have limited English proficiency (LEP) find job opportunities throughout the District, and to help DC agencies connect to the API community to recruit bilingual talents.

OAPIA made extensive efforts to reach out to different employers in order to register exhibitors for the job fair and to promote the event in the API communities. Partnerships were also formed with the ethnic media and with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to increase promotion of the event.

The 2nd Annual DiverseCITY Job Fair was a success with participation of more than 100 exhibitors from DC and Federal agencies, non-profit, and private sectors. OAPIA invited agencies and firms who were specifically looking for potential API employees, including people with limited English proficiency. Language assistance in Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin and Vietnamese were also offered at the event. Over 300 job seekers, mostly APIs, attended the event. Many people in the community have expressed interest in attending more job fairs of this diverse nature in the future.



Korean American Business Association's Gary Cha speaks at "Mind Your Business" Forum

Mind Your Business Forum – Merchant Engagement: On September 14, 2006, OAPIA organized a successful event for the small API merchants, the "Mind Your Business Forum" at the National Building Museum. More than fifty

API and non-API merchants gained helpful information from this all-day forum. APIs from different backgrounds such as Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Thais, and Vietnamese attended. OAPIA invited different professionals that shared their expertise to participants on topics such as Things to Remember About Commercial Leases, Where and How to Get Prime Commercial Spaces, Secrets to Marketing Small Businesses.

Annual API Youth Sidewalk Chalk Contest – Youth Engagement: OAPIA created a platform to motivate and engage API youths by organizing its "Annual API Youth Sidewalk Chalk Contest" at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library's main entrance. The theme for the contest was "Our Neighborhood". The event was open to the public and eighty-five API and African-American youths participated in the contest. Five winners from three age categories were chosen and awarded McDonald's gift certificates.

The District of Columbia Commission on the Arts & Humanities, the Department of Parks and Recreation, Safeway, McDonald's, and Utrech Arts Supplies Store, all contributed to make this event possible. The 2nd Annual API Youth Sidewalk Chalk Contest was covered in the DC Examiner and the District section of The Washington Post.



Winners of the 2nd Annual Youth Sidewalk Chalk Contest

OAPIA has consistently been an asset to District Agencies with its ability to access the API community, bringing their issues and recommendations to Agency's attention. In FY06, OAPIA supported District Agencies by spearheading the development of the API Taskforce on Education which was commissioned to bring the issues and concerns of the API community to DCPS and to work together to improve services and increase involvement with the API community. The mission of The API Task Force on Education is to establish connections and strengthen relationships between Asian and Pacific Islander community and DC Public Schools by.

- Increasing knowledge and awareness on available academic performance data on the API populations.
- Providing recommendations and solutions on key issues that impact academic achievement and student services of API students.
- Fostering collaboration between and among API families, students, teachers, educators, and other student service providers to create supportive learning environments for all children and increased parent involvement in DCPS

A chair and co-chair were selected to represent the Taskforce and served as spokespersons. It also agreed that a quarterly meeting with the Superintendent would allow for continued communication between the API community and the Superintendent

OAPIA also supported District Agencies by supporting their API staff. In FY06, OAPIA helped reform the DC Asian and Pacific American Council (DCAPAC). DCAPAC was established on April 28, 2000, to improve the quality of life for DC API employees through increased participation in government employment and programs in economic and community development, education, employment, health, human services and housing. On August 31, 2006, OAPIA helped organize its first major event, "Personnel Matters: A Workshop for Asian Pacific American Employees" on issues affecting the API employees in the District of Columbia. DCAPAC also coordinated numerous public meetings with DC agencies that took the form of site visits, roundtable discussions or informational briefings.

Inter-Agency Support and Advocacy

Inter-Agency Support and Advocacy



(from left to right) Greg Chen, Hien Vu, Neel Saxena, Arnaldo Ramos, Dr. Janey and Richard Tagle at the DCPS Task force Kickoff Event

Over the past year, OAPIA continued its strong presence in Language Access during the past year. While a Memorandum of Understanding with Office of Human Rights and Office on Latino Affairs was not signed, OAPIA continued its efforts in outreach, data collection, hiring of bilingual staff and quality control of translated documents. The Language Access Act entered its second year with a public hearing on Language Access and a push to amend the Act. OAPIA worked with Agencies to ensure linguistic and culturally appropriate delivery to the Asian community, but was hampered by a lack in authority over the Agencies with regards to Language Access.

The following are key activities that OAPIA did in FY06:

Translation Quality Control: OAPIA in conjunction with the Office on Latino Affairs (OLA) developed a quality control mechanism for the review and evaluation of translated documents. OAPIA sampled over 150 documents by contracting Chinese and Koreans translation vendors. Many of these documents translated in the three Asian languages were not up to standard and some were not readable. The most common areas that needed improvement continued to be punctuation, literal translations, and cultural competency. OAPIA presented its results to the OHR and will further look into addressing this issue in the upcoming fiscal year.

Linguistically Isolated Housing Voucher Program: In February 2005, OAPIA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) to assist in implementing, "The Linguistically Isolated Voucher Program," which provided a limited number of Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8 vouchers) to families within the API community whose heads of households are limited English proficient. The program operated a total of 100 vouchers for both Latino and Asian applicants

Public Hearing on Language Access: On October 17, 2006, Councilmember Orange hosted the first Public Hearing on Language Access. All Agencies reported out on their progress with regards to language Access, while the Community, specifically the Language Access Coalition provided feedback on the areas that need improvement. OAPIA presented its testimony on its role and status with the Language Access Act. OAPIA outlined out role in the areas



of data collection, outreach, hiring of bilingual personnel and quality control of translated documents primarily based on the MOU signed with OHR and provided recommendations for the future. OAPIA provided recommendations:

- Improve the quality of translations;
- Increased budgets for translations;
- Examining Agencies' frontline centers' service delivery; and
- Advocating for increased time dedicated to language access by Language Access Coordinators.

OAPIA is looking to advocate and address these issues in the upcoming year. Three API CBOs and other activists presented their experiences with Language Access and the implantation of the program.

Signing of DC Seoul Sister City Relationship

On March 13, 2006, Washington, D.C. and Seoul took the first major step in establishing closer relations as Seoul Mayor Myung Pak Lee visited the nation's capital to sign the sister city agreement with the District. In June 9, 2006, Mayor Williams visited Seoul at Mayor Lee's invitation, cementing ties as the 10th city to sign a sister city agreement with the District.

"Our two cities share many similarities" Mayor Williams said during the celebration ceremony held at Seoul City Hall at which he was awarded honorary citizenship.

Mayor Williams was very impressed by the Chong-Gye River Project, a major undertaking for Mayor Lee in the face of opposition and barriers. The Chong-Gye River project is a river restoration project which re-opened the pavement covering the 5.84 km long river to restore the river and its surrounding area to rebuild an environmentally friendly and safe area for locals. With Mayor Williams promise, the Chong-Gye River Project was televised on Channel 16 for a several months. The Mayor's intention was to provide an opportunity for our citizen to think about ways to restore and redevelop the Anacostia River.

During this trip, Mayor Williams met with business leaders through Federation of Korean Industries, as well as with Cultural and Artistic Association of Korea to initiate conversation to continue exchange between both cities. Mayor Williams and the delegation also visited the heavily guarded DMZ (DeMilitarized Zone) separating North and South Korea.

Mayor Williams, along with OAPIA's Interim Director Soohyun Koo and five representatives from D.C.-Seoul Sister City Relationship Steering Committee, spent two full days in Seoul, Korea.

External Relations

External Relations



Mayor Williams with Seoul Korea's Mayor Lee and dignitaries.

The Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs continue to play a vital role for the District of Columbia government and the API residents. It has helped Mayor Anthony A. Williams and DC agencies respond and provide services to the District's API residents through:

- Ensuring DC agencies deliver linguistically and culturally appropriate services to the API community through its role in the Language Access Act
- Translating information about DC government services and programs
- Reestablishing the DC Asian Pacific American Council to improve the quality of life for DC API employees through increased participation in government employment
- Build strong partnership with the API community and government program e.g., "The Linguistically Isolated Voucher" Program and the DCPS Education Taskforce
- Supporting the API community health, legal, and social needs by organizing its "ImmigrASIAN Fair" and disseminating resident resource materials
- Supporting the API business community through "Mind Your Business" Forum and weekly radio shows
- Providing employment opportunities in coordination with other DC agencies through its annual "DiverseCITY" Job Fair

The Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs also become a granting agency to ensure services are accessible to the City's API residents. It has provided \$230,000 in funding to API community-based organizations to continue provide services that complement the City's programs. Through initiatives and activities, the Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs has continued to be a vital part of ensuring equal access to District government programs and services for people with limited English proficiency.

Accomplishments
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

New Challenges
NEW CHALLENGES

New Leadership
NEW LEADERSHIP

New Visions
NEW VISIONS

Conclusion
Conclusion